

Chairman Haskell, Chairman Elliot, ranking members, vice chairs, and distinguished members of the Committee,

My name is Michael Cerulli. I am a student at UConn and proud to serve as the statewide president of the College Democrats of Connecticut. Today, I am testifying in strong support two important pieces of legislation: **S.B 881 AN ACT CONCERNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** and **H.B. 6374 AN ACT CONCERNING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES**.

The passage of both of these pieces of legislation will have an immediate and lasting positive impact on college students throughout our state.

First, **S.B 881** will provide countless students across Connecticut with expanded opportunities to pursue higher education. It's no secret that here in Connecticut, we face a myriad of challenges related to workforce development and the retention of young professionals post-graduation. The Governor's slate of proposed workforce development bills tackles many of these challenges head on.

Specifically, I believe that the automatic admissions provisions of **S.B 881** will generate broader interest and enrollment in our outstanding state college system. I am also encouraged by the proposed FAFSA graduation requirement. This will help students, particularly underprivileged students, access more financial resources to pursue higher education.

Finally, I want to note the positive impacts of the UPass mass transit program and the potential benefits of creating a similar resource for Connecticut's private universities and other training providers. Prior to the pandemic, UPass was an extremely beneficial program for students who wanted an affordable, reliable, and environmentally conscious way to travel throughout the state. **S.B 881**'s proposed improvement of student access to mass transit will expand students' professional and recreational engagement with Connecticut's growing cities—a key component of our state's post-Covid comeback.

I am also testifying today in strong support of **H.B. 6374**. This legislation, which enjoys broad bipartisan support, will add much needed protections for victims of campus sexual violence. Now more than ever, it is crucial that we stand with victims and do all we can to validate, uplift, and protect them. I am certain committee members are familiar with the horrifying statistics on campus sexual violence. Research by the Association of American Universities shows that, among undergraduate students, more than 26% of females and 6% of males have experienced some form of sexual assault. We also must not forget the particular impact this scourge of campus sexual violence has on

members of the LGBTQ+ community. For students, this crisis is about more than just statistics. We live the tragedy of campus sexual violence when we hear the stories of survivors and when we see the pain inflicted by these awful actions. Expanding protections for our peers who have survived campus sexual violence is an imperative and I strongly urge all members to support this legislation. I also want to thank the tireless organizers at Every Voice CT for their continued advocacy.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Michael Cerulli